

## **AMERICAN CITIZENS SERVICES**

### **American Citizens Services Newsletter**

#### **U.S. EMBASSY LA PAZ, BOLIVIA**

**APRIL 2006**

As a service to U.S. citizens in or traveling to Bolivia, we are distributing a monthly American Citizen Services newsletter for U.S. citizens. Through the monthly American Citizens Services newsletter, the Consular Section provides information pertaining to consular procedures, policies, and other topics of general interest to U.S. citizens in Bolivia who have registered with the American Citizens Services (ACS) Unit and provided an email address.

If you believe others would benefit from receiving this newsletter, please forward it to them and encourage them to subscribe. To subscribe to our monthly newsletter and receive other updates, please register online by following this link:

<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/> or

<http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/ACS.htm#registration>

If you do not wish to receive this monthly newsletter, or would like to be removed from our email list, please email us at [consularlapaz@state.gov](mailto:consularlapaz@state.gov) or [USCit.Services.Bolivia@gmail.com](mailto:USCit.Services.Bolivia@gmail.com), our new Internet email address exclusively for U.S. citizen services.

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### **NEW CONSULAR INFORMATION SHEET FOR BOLIVIA**

On April 4, 2006, the Department of State published an updated Consular Information Sheet for Bolivia. Consular Information Sheets are usually updated every six months. We emailed the new Consular Information Sheet to our wardens so they could disseminate it to U.S. Citizens with whom they have contact. The new Consular Information Sheet is also available on the Department of State Web site, [WWW.TRAVEL.STATE.GOV](http://WWW.TRAVEL.STATE.GOV), and our Web site at <http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/services.htm>.

### **INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (IRS) TAX FORMS AVAILABLE ONLINE**

With the traditional Federal tax filing deadline of April 15 approaching, we wish to remind taxpayers that they may qualify for a three month extension. For further information, please consult the IRS Web page at <http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/article/0,,id=98155,00.html>.

The American Citizen Services Unit has received a limited supply of Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax forms for preparing 2005 tax returns. All forms will be available first online at <http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html>. Please note that the Consular Section cannot provide U.S. taxpayer assistance, specifically in preparing tax returns. Rather, all queries should be directed to the IRS using the contact information listed below.

### **IRS CONTACT INFORMATION**

The IRS has a significant amount of information available online, including all needed forms. As there is no one at the Consular Section who can answer tax questions, please refer to the following sources of information:

-- IRS Home Page: <http://www.irs.gov>

-- Citizens Abroad:

[http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/international/article/0,,id=97324\\_00.html](http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/international/article/0,,id=97324_00.html)

-- Persons in the Military

<http://www.irs.gov/individuals/military/index.html>

-- Tax Forms and Publications

<http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html>

-- Electronic Payment Website: <http://www.eftps.gov>

-- Refund Information: Go to <http://www.irs.gov>, click on "Where's my refund?"

-- Tax Law Questions: Go to <http://www.irs.gov>, click on "help" in the top menu, click on "Tax Law Questions"

## IRS PHONE SERVICES

-- Individuals: 1-800-829-1040

-- Businesses: 1-800-829-4933

-- Customer Service Phone: 1-215-516-2000, M-F, 0600-2300 (EST)

-- Customer Service Fax: 1-215-516-2555

-- Refund Inquiries: 1-800-829-1954

-- TeleTax: 1-800-829-4477

-- ITINS after 30 days: 1-215-516-4846

-- Exempt Organization Help Desk: 1-877-829-5500

-- Tax Offset Program (TOP) Help Desk: 1-800-304-3107\*

-- E-Services Help Desk: 1-512-416-7750

The Fax Service cannot be used to transmit your tax return.

## MAILING ADDRESSES

The Philadelphia Service Center services all Overseas filers, including military personnel stationed abroad:

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19255-0215

For Courier Service:

PHILADELPHIA SERVICE CENTER  
11601 ROOSEVELT BLVD  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19154

ITIN - to obtain an ITIN:

IRS Philadelphia Service Center  
ITIN Unit  
P.O. Box 447  
Bensalem, PA 19020

#### URGENT TAX NEEDS

For Collection/Levy Status Accounts Problems:

-- Phone: 1-215-516-2004  
-- Fax: 1-215-516-6931

Taxpayer Advocate Office

-- Phone: 1-215-516-2499  
-- Fax: 1-215-516-2677  
-- Toll-Free 1-877-777-4778

#### INTERNATIONAL TAXPAYER ADVOCATE SERVICE

San Patricio Office Center, Room 200  
7 Tabomico Street  
Guaynabo, Puerto Rico 00966  
Phone: 787-622-8931  
Fax: 787-622-8933

#### Fake IRS Email - Scam Alert

We have learned of a phishing email scam that attempts to convince the user that it is from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by using a spoofed "From" address of "tax-refunds@irs.gov". Upon clicking on the link provided in the email, the user is taken to a fraudulent site that looks like a legitimate U.S. government site. The user is then asked to provide personal information, such as their social security, credit card and bank pin numbers. Do not enter any data; do not respond to this fraudulent email.

The US Computer Emergency Response Team (US-CERT) encourages users to take the following measures to protect themselves from this type of phishing attack: Do not follow unsolicited web links received in

email messages and be sure to contact your financial institution immediately if you believe your account/and or financial information has been compromised.

For additional information on ways to avoid phishing email attacks, US-CERT recommends that all users review "Avoiding Social Engineering and Phishing Attacks" at <http://www.us-cert.gov/cas/tips/ST04-014.html>. Information is also available on Spoofed/Forged Emails at [http://www.cert.org/tech\\_tips/email\\_spoofing.html](http://www.cert.org/tech_tips/email_spoofing.html).

### **NEW VISA INFORMATION SERVICE EFFECTIVE MARCH 30**

On March 30, 2006, the U.S. Mission in Bolivia commenced a new visa information service. Persons seeking information on U.S. visa services and requirements, including scheduling a visa appointment, must use this service. This requirement also applies to U.S. citizens inquiring on behalf of their non-U.S. citizen family members or others wishing to travel to the U.S. Case-specific queries, such as why a particular visa was refused, should still be directed to the U.S. Embassy Consular Section at [CONSULARLAPEZ@STATE.GOV](mailto:CONSULARLAPEZ@STATE.GOV). For further details on the new Visa Information Service, please consult our Web site at [HTTP://LAPAZ.USEMBASSY.GOV/ENGLISH/CONSULAR/NIV/NIVVISASERV.HTM](http://LAPAZ.USEMBASSY.GOV/ENGLISH/CONSULAR/NIV/NIVVISASERV.HTM). As noted in the Consular Information Sheet, U.S. citizens seeking information on Bolivian visa services and requirements should consult the Bolivian Immigration Web site at [HTTP://WWW.MIGRACION.GOV.BO](http://WWW.MIGRACION.GOV.BO) (please note that the Web site is in Spanish).

### **RENEWING U.S. DRIVERS LICENSES WHILE OUTSIDE THE U.S.**

If you find that your U.S. state drivers license is about to expire and you would like to have it renewed, you should contact the DMV office in the state where your current license was issued. Some states will allow you to renew your license while overseas, others will not.

A good place to start your search for information on this process is <http://www.dmv.org>. From there you can link to your state's DMV office website which usually posts information on procedures for renewing your license. Although the U.S. Mission has no role in the renewal process, we can notarize certain documents for you if required by your state for renewal. See below for more information on notarial services that we can and cannot provide.

## **HOURS AND RANGE FOR CONSULAR SERVICES AT U.S. CONSULAR AGENCY IN SANTA CRUZ AND COCHABAMBA**

Effective October 24, 2005, the U.S. Consular Agency in Santa Cruz expanded its public hours. U.S. citizens and others seeking non-visa consular services may come to the U.S. Consular Agency in Santa Cruz Monday from 9:00AM to 12:30PM and 2:00PM to 5:00PM as well as Tuesday through Friday from 9:00AM to 12:30PM, except U.S. and local holidays.

The U.S. Consular Agency in Cochabamba is currently open to the public Monday through Friday from 9:00AM to Noon, except U.S. and local holidays. We will advise U.S. citizens and other consular customers through this newsletter of any scheduled changes in those hours.

Please note that the consular agencies provide only certain American Citizen Services, such as receiving applications for passports and consular reports of birth abroad that are then forwarded to the U.S. Embassy in La Paz for adjudication and processing. For visa information or assistance, please consult our Web site at [www.bolivia.usembassy.gov](http://www.bolivia.usembassy.gov). If after reviewing the information there you still have specific visa questions, please contact the Visa Unit at [consularlapaz@state.gov](mailto:consularlapaz@state.gov). Questions concerning American Citizen Services that cannot be answered by the information on the Web site or the consular agencies may be directed to the American Citizen Services Unit at [USCit.Services.Bolivia@gmail.com](mailto:USCit.Services.Bolivia@gmail.com).

## **HOURS FOR AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES IN LA PAZ EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 1, 2006**

Effective February 1, 2006, in order to better respond to our customers and provide enhanced consular services the American Citizen Services Unit will be open in the afternoons only Monday through Thursday, from 1:30PM to 5:00PM, and Fridays from 8:30AM to 12:30PM and 2:00PM to 4:00PM, except U.S. and local holidays. This change will better accommodate school age children, who need to appear in person to apply for new passports, and other clients. To avoid common impediments to quicker processing (such as incorrectly done photographs and insufficient documents), please first check the requirements of the relevant service at

<http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/ACS.htm>.

Please note that Federal benefits checks and IRS refund checks, when those arrive, are now distributed by the consular cashier at Window 5 and not the American Citizen Services Unit window. Federal check recipients may wish to come on Friday mornings to collect their checks given that most banks, including the Banco Bisa office at the U.S. Embassy, tend to be open in the mornings and close in the early afternoon.

## **MOSQUITO BORNE ILLNESSES**

The U.S. Embassy recently provided to all employees information on mosquito borne illnesses. We are including the relevant information here for U.S. citizens and/or their family members.

With the recent rains there has been an increase in mosquito-borne illnesses (yellow fever, dengue and malaria), as is expected. Along with protective measures to prevent bites, there is prophylaxis medication to take to prevent malaria and a vaccine for yellow fever. Unfortunately, nothing exists at this time, except bite prevention for dengue.

At this time, the Ministry Of Health has established check points at the toll booths on the Yungas Road to determine vaccination status and offering the vaccine for yellow fever. They are recommending that anyone traveling to the Chapare be vaccinated.

If you are planning travel to this area, we recommend you check your vaccination status and to carry proof of immunization. The yellow fever vaccine is good for 10 years and should be received 10 days prior to travel to the tropical areas.

While the vaccines and prophylaxis medicine is important, PREVENTION of bites is truly critical! Although it sounds simplistic, prevention can be highly effective. The less the number of mosquito bites, the less the risk of infection. Preventive measures include: Avoid outdoor activities at night when possible. The mosquitoes that transmit malaria are primarily active (biting/feeding) from dusk to dawn. Dengue and yellow fever bearing mosquitoes are active dawn to dusk.

Remain in well-screened areas at night. Where screening is inadequate, sleep under a "tucked in" mosquito net.



3. When outdoors at night, wear clothes that cover most of the body, such as long-sleeve shirts and pants.
4. Apply insect repellent containing 33% DEET (N, N-diethyl-M-toluamide) to the skin. The 3M DEET lotion is considered best. It can provide protection for up to 12 hours and will not wear off because of perspiration or humidity. Please note 33% should not be applied to children under 12 years old. They will require a lower percentage of DEET.
5. Spray Permanone (permethrin) tick/insect repellent over clothing and socks. This should provide adequate protection for up to two weeks and 2 washings. It can also be sprayed on mosquito netting and will enhance the netting's effectiveness.
6. Use a pyrethrum-containing flying insect spray (Raid, Baygon, and others) in living and sleeping areas, particularly under beds and behind curtains.

## **FLOODS & FLASH FLOODS – EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

The U.S. Embassy recently provided to all employees information on floods and flash floods. We are including the relevant information here for U.S. citizens and/or their family members.

Floods and flash floods are dangers in many parts of the world. Most places in Bolivia occasionally suffer from one or the other. As the tragic events of February 2002 proved, mountainous or hilly terrain such as that around La Paz is particularly susceptible to flash floods. Cochabamba, Santa Cruz and Trinidad are also susceptible to floods. We need to prepare ourselves and our families for such emergencies. The information provided below is adapted from data provided by the USA's Federal Emergency Management Administration.

### **I. FLOODS AND FLASH FLOODS - WHY YOU SHOULD BE PREPARED**

#### **A. WHAT IS A FLOOD?**

With the exception of fire, floods are the most common and widespread of all natural disasters. Most communities can experience some kind of flooding after spring rains, heavy thunderstorms, or winter snow thaws. Floods can be slow or fast rising but generally develop over a period of days. Flooding in the Santa Cruz and Trinidad areas often follows this pattern. Dam failures are potentially the worst flood events. When a dam fails, a gigantic quantity of water is suddenly let loose downstream, destroying anything in its path.

## B. WHAT IS A FLASH FLOOD?

Flash floods usually result from intense storms dropping large amounts of rain within a brief period. Flash floods occur with little or no warning and can reach full peak in only a few minutes. In mountainous areas such as that of La Paz, Cochabamba, and much of western Bolivia, a flash flood can develop just a few minutes after rain has begun to fall. Some flash floods are occasioned when a heavy rain and runoff dislodges objects that then clog drains or river courses. What was a free running watercourse suddenly becomes a basin with no outlet. The water will then overflow the banks or finally dislodge the object, with the effect of a small dam bursting.

## C. WHY FLOODS ARE DANGEROUS

1. Floodwaters can be extremely dangerous. The force of swiftly moving water that is six inches deep (15 cm.) can easily knock adults off their feet. The best protection during a flood is to leave the area and go to shelter on higher ground.
2. Flash floodwaters move at very fast speeds and can roll boulders, tear out trees, destroy buildings, and obliterate bridges. Walls of water can reach heights of 10 to 20 feet (3 to 6 meters) and generally are accompanied by a deadly cargo of debris. Flash floods can also appear without warning far downstream from the areas experiencing rain. The best response to any signs of flash flooding is to move immediately and quickly to higher ground.
3. Cars can easily be swept away in just 2 feet (60 cm.) of moving water. If floodwaters rise around a car, it should be abandoned immediately. Passengers should climb to higher ground. In the February 2002 floods in La Paz, many people lost their lives when their taxis or personal vehicles were washed away by the floodwaters. NOTE: A cupful of water, if splashed on the right part of an engine compartment, can stall an engine. NEVER/NEVER drive through moving water. The ground under the water may have been washed away and the area may be much deeper than it appears.

## D. DANGER ZONES

Floods and flash floods can occur almost anywhere where it rains. Communities particularly at risk are those located in low-lying areas, in narrow divides or valleys, near water, or downstream from a dam.

## II. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & PROCEDURES - - FLOODS & FLASH FLOODS

### A. Mitigation for Residential Property Occupants:

In your residences be particularly aware of any activities that can prevent an emergency, reduce the chance of an emergency happening, or lessen the damaging effects of unavoidable emergencies. Investing some time in steps such as checking roofs (from the ground), noting obstructions to drains and watercourses close to your residence, and asking your landlord, as applicable, for assistance will help reduce the amount of structural damage to your residence.

### B. General Preparedness:

1. Plan and practice an evacuation route. The planned routes should include information on the safest routes to several destinations that are likely to be safe havens from floods. A bridge or roadway can fail and cut off the routes to which you are accustomed. If you live in flash flood areas, you should develop several alternative routes.
2. Be sure that all members of the family know what to do in the event of a flood. A flood can be terrifying, and unless people are familiar with and practice ways to deal with floods, they can become so frightened that they are unable to remove themselves from harm's way.
3. Be alert to dramatic changes of the weather that can be precursors of flood events.
4. If you live in a frequently flooded area, stockpile emergency materials such as plastic sheeting, hammer and saw, pry bar, shovels, and sandbags.
5. Use stoppers to plug showers, tubs or basins on ground floors.
6. Take pictures of your residence and its contents. Before/after photographs will aid greatly with insurance claims.

### C. Have disaster supplies on hand:

- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- First aid kit and manual
- Emergency food and potable water
- Non-electric can opener
- Essential medicines
- Cash and credit cards
- Sturdy shoes

- Heavy work gloves (leather is better than cloth/canvas)
- Duct tape for various emergency uses

D. Develop an emergency communication plan:

- In case family members are separated from one another during floods or flash floods (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school), have a plan for getting back together.
- Ask an associate or friend to serve as the "family contact" or contact your warden. Make sure everyone in the family knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person **AND** the phone number of your warden.
- Make sure that all family members know how to respond after a flood or flash flood. Teach all family members how and when to turn off gas, electricity, and water.
- Teach children how and when to call 1-1-0 (policia) and 1-1-9 (bomberos) and which radio station to tune to for emergency information.
- Ask your insurance agent about flood insurance. Homeowners' policies usually do not cover flood damage.

### III. DURING A FLOOD WATCH

1. Listen to a battery-operated radio for the latest storm information.
2. Fill bathtubs and sinks with water for washing/sanitation, and jugs/bottles with potable water in case water supplies become contaminated or cut off.
3. Bring indoors any portable outdoor belongings, such as patio furniture.
4. Move valuable household possessions to the upper floors or to safe ground if time permits.
5. If you are instructed to do so by local authorities, turn off electricity at the main switch. Close the main valve on any portable LP gas containers.
6. Be prepared to evacuate.

### IV. DURING A FLOOD

A1. If Indoors:

- Turn on battery-operated radio or television to get the latest emergency information.
- Have your pre-assembled emergency supplies at hand.
- If told to leave your residence, do so immediately. Keep your warden and the Embassy or nearest Consular Agency informed of your location and welfare.

#### A2. If Outdoors:

- Climb to high ground and stay there.
- Avoid walking through any floodwaters. If it is moving swiftly, even water 6 inches (15 cm.) deep can sweep you off your feet.

#### A.3. If in a Car:

- If you come to a flooded area, turn around and go another way.
- If your car stalls, abandon it immediately and climb to higher ground. Many deaths have resulted from attempts to move stalled vehicles.
- NEVER/NEVER drive into moving water. The ground below may be washed out and you could find your car submerged.

#### B. During an Evacuation,

- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.
- Listen to a battery-operated radio for evacuation instructions.
- Follow recommended evacuation routes- shortcuts might be blocked.
- Leave early enough to avoid being marooned by flooded roads.
- As possible, let your warden and the Embassy or nearest consular agency know your location and your condition/welfare.

#### V. AFTER A FLOOD

- Flood dangers do not end when the water begins to recede. Listen to a radio or television and don't return home until authorities indicate it is safe to do so.
- Remember to help your neighbors who may require special assistance--infants, elderly people, and people with disabilities.
- Inspect foundations for cracks or other damage.
  - Stay out of buildings if floodwaters remain around the building.

#### **When entering buildings, use extreme caution.**

- ***NEVER/NEVER enter a flooded house.***
- ***Turn the power off at the main breaker before entering the house.***
- ***Wear sturdy shoes and use battery-powered lanterns or flashlights*** when examining buildings.
- ***Examine walls, floors, doors, and windows*** to make sure that the building is not in danger of collapsing.
- ***Watch out for animals***, especially poisonous snakes, that may have come into your home with the floodwaters. Use a stick to poke through debris.
- ***Watch for loose plaster and ceilings*** that could fall.

- ***Take pictures of the damage***--both of the house and its contents for insurance claims.
- ***Look for fire hazards.***
  - Broken or leaking gas lines
  - Flooded electrical circuits
  - Submerged furnaces or electrical appliances
  - Flammable or explosive materials coming from upstream
- ***Throw away food***- including canned goods- that has come in contact with floodwaters.
- ***Pump out flooded basements gradually*** (*about one-third of the water per day*) to avoid structural damage.
- ***Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits, and leaching systems*** as soon as possible. Damaged sewage systems are health hazards.

#### **NOTE: Inspecting Utilities in a Damaged Home**

- ***Check for gas leaks***- Most homes in Bolivia do not have natural gas service. For those that do, or for those that use bottled gas: If you smell gas or hear blowing or hissing noise, open a door or window and quickly leave the building. Turn off the gas at the outside main valve if you can and call the gas company from a neighbor's home. If you turn off the gas for any reason, it must be turned back on by a professional.
- ***Look for electrical system damage***- If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell hot insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If you have to step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, call an electrician for advice. Keep in mind that if a flood has struck more than a few homes, it will take time for available electricians to field all the calls and visit each residence.
- ***Check for sewage and water line damage***- If you suspect sewage lines are damaged avoid using the toilets and call a plumber. If water pipes are damaged, be aware that the tap water is likely to be more highly contaminated than usual.

#### **UPDATE ON ELECTRONIC PASSPORTS**

To better facilitate international travel for U.S. citizens and enhance border security, the Department of State is phasing in issuance of electronic passports (E-Passports). The new passport combines facial recognition and contact less chip technology. The Department of State hopes to have all domestic passport agencies issuing E-Passports by the end of 2006. Previously issued passports without electronic chips

will remain valid until their expiration dates. For more information, please consult the Web site of the Bureau of Consular Affairs, Department of State, at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

## **WESTERN HEMISPHERE TRAVEL INITIATIVE COMING- APPLY FOR PASSPORTS EARLY**

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 requires that by January 1, 2008, travelers to and from the Caribbean, Bermuda, Panama, Mexico and Canada have a passport or other secure, accepted document to enter or re-enter the United States. The Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security are working to implement this legislation. The Department of State anticipates an increase in demand for passport services as part of this requirement, and all non-emergency passports received at overseas posts are processed in the United States. We thus recommend that persons with passports expiring in the next two years apply early to renew those passports in order to receive the new passports in a timely manner. For more information on passport renewal procedures, please visit our Web site at <http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/ACS.htm>. Additional information on the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative may be found at the Bureau of Consular Affairs, Department of State Web site, [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

## **NOTARIAL SERVICES – WHAT WE CAN AND CANNOT PROVIDE**

We included the following information in our monthly newsletters since September 2005 and also conveyed this to the Ministry of Foreign Relations. Because we still receive requests from U.S. citizens to legalize/certify/notarize/stamp documents for use in Bolivia and/or for other notarial services that we legally cannot provide, we are repeating this information on notarial services.

In accordance with U.S. law and regulations, the Consular Section may provide certain notarial services in connection with documents to be used in the United States. Documents for use in Bolivia must be processed by Bolivian authorities, even if the documents originate in the U.S. The Consular Section has advised the Bolivian authorities that we accordingly will not certify documents for use other than in the

U.S. Therefore, U.S. citizens who wish to present in Bolivia their U.S. birth, marriage, death or other civil documents should have those translated in the U.S. and authenticated by the nearest Bolivian Consul. Similarly, U.S. citizens wishing to marry in Bolivia and who require "certificates of singleness" may query the relevant Bolivian Civil Registry office to clarify how that requirement may be met. Some civil registry offices accept a sworn statement in front of a Bolivian judge. Please contact the relevant Bolivian Civil Registry Office for further details. For more information on notarial services provided by the Consular Section, please check our Web site at <http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/ACS.htm>. For information on how to authenticate documents in the U.S., please consult the Department of State Office of Authentications Web site, <http://www.state.gov/m/a/auth/>.

## **U.S. VOTING INFORMATION FOR 2006-2007 ELECTIONS**

The U.S. 2006 mid-term elections are already underway, with the first primaries held in March. At stake are all 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, 33 Senate seats, 37 state governorships, and thousands of state and local initiatives. To assist overseas voters concerning these upcoming elections, the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) has provided an updated Voting Assistance Guide for 2006-2007. We have distributed copies of that publication to the consular agencies in Cochabamba and Santa Cruz, the American Cooperative School in La Paz, the U.S. Commercial Library at the U.S. Embassy (open to the public 0900 to 1200 and 1500 to 1700, Monday through Friday except local and U.S. holidays), and the wardens outside of La Paz. Please note that the standard voter registration and absentee ballot application are available on line at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov) as well as at the American Citizens Unit here in La Paz and our consular agencies in Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. All U.S. voting information and forms provided by the Federal Voting Assistance Program is also available on the Web at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov).

## **PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PREPAREDNESS**

The Department of State has asked all overseas offices to ensure that private U.S. citizens realize the need to make their own contingency plans to respond to a possible influenza pandemic. Such contingency planning would include obtaining influenza vaccines, which the USG cannot provide for private U.S. citizens and/or their dependents. For



further details, please consult the Avian Influenza Fact Sheet and the related Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) published by the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, at [http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health\\_1181.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_1181.html).

## **INTERNET EMAIL ADDRESS EXCLUSIVELY FOR AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES**

In order to facilitate communication with U.S. citizens, we have established an Internet email address exclusively for American Citizen Services. That email is [USCit.Services.Bolivia@gmail.com](mailto:USCit.Services.Bolivia@gmail.com). Please note that "American Citizen Services" does not include visa queries or any matters related to U.S. visas. Visa questions should continue to be sent to [consularlapaz@state.gov](mailto:consularlapaz@state.gov). Emails received at the American Citizen Services Gmail account that do not clearly concern American Citizen Services may be deleted without a response.

## **NO MORE AMENDMENTS IN U.S. PASSPORTS – ADDING VISA PAGES STILL PERMITTED**

Because we have recently received requests to amend passports, we are reiterating the following information provided in prior newsletters.

As announced by the Department of State on September 19, 2005 and also conveyed through the Embassy's warden system, effective September 26, 2005, as an additional security enhancement, all U.S. passport offices will no longer amend valid passports. Instead, customers requesting name changes, extension of validity for limited passports, or correction of a printing error will apply for replacement passports. These applications may be submitted at the U.S. Embassy in La Paz or through the U.S. consular agencies in Santa Cruz and/or Cochabamba.

If the change is *within one year after issuance*, customers will submit a U.S. Passport Re-Application Form (DS 5504), together with the passport that needs the change, the documentation required, and new passport pictures. There will be no charge for routine processing. Please note that this form may be used only for passports to be printed in the U.S. Emergency passport requests must be submitted on form DS-11 or form DS-82; please read and follow the instructions on those forms to ensure that the proper form is used.

If the change is *more than one year after issuance*, customers will need to submit an Application for Passport By Mail (DS-82), together with the passport that needs the change, the documentation required, and new pictures. The cost includes the \$55 application fee and \$12 security surcharge, for a total of \$67 for routine processing. Because minor children are not eligible to use this form, changes in children's passports will need to be submitted using the DS-11 form and paying the related consular fees. Of course, if the requested data change is due to a printing error by Passport Services, there will be no charge.

Those only needing to add visa pages to their passports will submit an Application for Additional Visa Pages (DS-4085). This service is always free of charge when routine. Please note that for any passport services for children under age 14, including adding visa pages, the parental consent requirements apply. For more information on these requirements, please consult the Department of State, Consular Affairs, website at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) or the U.S. Embassy website, <http://bolivia.usembassy.gov>.

All of these forms are available online at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov). The Passport Amendment/Validation Form (DS-19), previously used to amend passports, will no longer be valid. For more information on applying for a U.S. passport, forms, and a wealth of other international travel information, please visit the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs website at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

## **EMERGENCY PASSPORTS**

Emergency passports are issued in cases of genuine emergencies that require urgent travel. Because of the immediate need for such a passport, the emergency passports issued have a limited validity of, at most, one year and are limited to 24 pages. Emergency passports cannot be extended nor can another emergency passport be issued to replace an emergency passport. Visa pages will not be added to an emergency passport. As soon as possible, the emergency passport should be replaced immediately by applying within one year from the emergency passport's issuance date for a full validity passport at no additional charge.

Regular passports are normally received within 15 calendar days after the U.S. Embassy receives the application then forwarded via DHL to

the nearest Consular Agency (Cochabamba and Santa Cruz) or kept at the American Citizen Services office in La Paz for collection. More information may be found at

<http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/ACS.htm>

## **CURRENT TRAVEL INFORMATION**

For the most current travel warnings, public announcements, and other travel information published by the Department of State, such as the Public Announcement for Bolivia issued December 13, please go directly to [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov). To receive this information automatically, please register through the Internet-Based Registration System (IBRS) at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs>. More information on IBRS is provided below.

## **INTERNET-BASED REGISTRATION SYSTEM**

U.S. citizens who travel or reside abroad can now register a record of their trip or residence so that the Department of State and/or nearby Embassy or Consulate can communicate with and assist citizens in case of an emergency. Registration is now online, and can be accessed at:

<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs>. If you are already registered with us, please re-register online so that we can update our records. Through this secure, online registration system, citizens can register and update their contact information on the Internet at any time. The website also provides citizens with up-to-date travel information customized to their unique itinerary. The data citizens provide is secured behind Department of State firewalls, accessed only by cleared personnel in Embassies, Consulates, and the Department of State, and releasable only with the U.S. citizen's permission under the provisions of the Privacy Act.

## **UPCOMING HOLIDAYS AND OTHER CLOSURES**

Please note that the Embassy will be closed on the following official holidays in during 2006.

A - American Holiday, L - Local Holiday

April 14 (Friday)	Good Friday	L
May 1 (Monday)	Bolivian Labor Day	L
May 29 (Monday)	Memorial Day	A
June 15 (Thursday)	Corpus Christi	L
July 4 (Tuesday)	US Independence	A
July 16 (TBD if observed Friday or Monday)	La Paz Day	L
August 6 (TBD if observed Friday or Monday)	Bolivian Independence	L
September 4 (Monday)	US Labor Day	A
October 9 (Monday)	Columbus Day	L
November 2 (Thursday)	All Saints' Day	L
November 10 (Friday)	Veterans' Day	A
November 23 (Thursday)	Thanksgiving	A
December 25 (Monday)	Christmas	A/L

## OTHER INTERNET ADDRESSES OF INTEREST TO U.S. CITIZENS

U.S. Federal Government: <http://www.firstgov.gov>

U.S. Department of State, Consular Affairs: <http://travel.state.gov>

U.S. Department of Homeland Security: <http://www.dhs.gov>

U.S. Federal Aviation Administration: <http://www.faa.gov>

U.S. Internal Revenue Service: <http://www.irs.gov>

Social Security Administration: <http://www.ssa.gov>; SSA Newsletter: [www.ssa.gov/eneews/](http://www.ssa.gov/eneews/)

Federal Voting Assistance: <http://www.fvap.gov>

U.S. Customs & Border Protection: <http://www.cbp.gov> (for information including importation of household pets, animal and plant health inspection, etc)

U.S. Department of Agriculture: <http://www.usda.gov> (for information on food products, food safety and inspection service).

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